



## **Entry-Level Humanitarian Professional Programme (EHP)**

### **Frequently Asked Questions**

**July 2013**

#### **1. What is the EHP?**

The Entry-Level Humanitarian Professional Programme (EHP) is a new recruitment and conversion initiative that was announced by the High Commissioner on 17 January in IOM/FOM/002/2013. It will be a competitive point of entry into UNHCR's Professional category. Through the conversion of UNHCR staff members and the recruitment of external candidates, a cohort of highly motivated and talented individuals, who have a passion for humanitarian work, will be selected to join the EHP at the P2 level and be deployed to the field.

The overall strategic objective for UNHCR's International Professional Recruitment and Conversion Initiative is to identify the talent UNHCR requires to meet its operational and organizational demands today and in the future.

The EHP is not geared to the filling of specific positions, but rather to identify a cohort of highly qualified individuals who have the required profiles that UNHCR has identified and will be prepared to undertake suitable assignments anywhere in the world.

#### **2. What is a cohort system?**

A cohort is a group of people who come together to share a common goal. The idea behind a cohort is to bring people together so they can share knowledge, camaraderie, and support each other as they learn and work together. The cohort model provides a support system that has a high success rate.

#### **3. Will EHP posts be advertised in the Compendium?**

EHP generic functional vacancy announcements i.e. Protection Officer, Program Officer etc. will not be advertised in the compendium, but will be announced in an all staff email and will be posted on a specific webpage dedicated to the EHP on the UNHCR website and Web Relief. In addition, social media feeds will be used regularly to update potential candidates on programme developments.

## Eligibility, application and selection process

### 4. What are the eligibility requirements?

Eligibility Requirements are as follows:

- i) Advance university degree, as least a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution with a minimum of two years of cumulative relevant work experience in accordance with UN grading criteria for grading at the P2 level; participants shall be 40 years of age or younger at the time of recruitment or conversion.
- ii) Staff members of UNHCR are eligible to apply provided they have completed at **least one year of their current assignment** as of the cut-off date for applications

As a special measure, GS and FS staff at the GS-6/GS-7 and FS-5 levels who do not have a Bachelor's degree as indicated in Para 6 (a)(1) and (b)(1) in the IOM/FOM, but who have a minimum of six years of experience in UNHCR will be eligible to apply. Interested JPOs and P2 staff members are eligible to apply as well.

### 5. Para 1.2.i of the IOM/FOM indicates that candidates will be recruited for UNHCR, not for specific positions. What does this mean?

When applicants apply to the EHP, the advertisements will be to a functional position without a specific location (Protection, Programme, Supply, Admin/Finance, Human Resources). DHRM will match the selected cohort members to whichever post or location, best matches their skills profile.

### 6. How will applicants be selected?

Applicants, both internal and external, will be screened using various criteria including: eligibility requirements, relevant work experience, functional qualifications, and written and analytical assessment tests. Shortlisted candidates will be subject to a panel interview and those selected will form the EHP cohort and be deployed to the field following successful completion of a comprehensive UNHCR orientation in Budapest. If a candidate declines the position offered, he/she will be deemed to have given up their membership as a cohort member.

### 7. What is the deadline for applications?

The deadline for applications is 31 August 2013.

### 8. I have no university degree, but 10 years professional experience with UNHCR. Am I eligible for participating in the EHP?

Yes, as a special measure, Ref IOM/FOM/002/2013 page 4 point 7 states, General Service and Field Service staff at the GS-6/GS-7 and FS-5 levels who do not have a Bachelor's degree but who have a minimum of six years of experience in UNHCR will be eligible to apply to the EHP.

### 9. How flexible will DHRM be with language skills?

All applicants will need to demonstrate excellent knowledge of English and at least one other UN language (French, Spanish, Arabic, Russian or Chinese).

## Former IPR candidates

### **10. The HC announced that with the implementation of the EHP the IPR will be closed. I was on the IPR. What happens to me now?**

Since 2004, the International Professional Roster (IPR) has been a valuable source of entry-level talent to the organization. With the introduction of the new recruitment and conversion initiatives, the IPR will be closed. Former IPR candidates will need to apply and compete like any other applicant.

### **11. UNHCR has not recruited or converted staff members from the IPR for many years. I was on the list, but no selection took place. Now I am 42 years old. Am I still eligible to apply for the EHP?**

No, according to IOM/002, page 3 paragraph 6 (ii) participants shall not be older than 40 years old at the time of recruitment or conversion. However, staff will be eligible to apply for the Capacity Building Initiative (CBI) which has no age limitations.

## Orientation Programme

### **12. What exactly is involved in the two weeks onboarding/orientation programme?**

During the first week, cohort members will be provided an overview of UNHCR, its vision, values, mandate and its operational work. For the second week, cohort members will be given specific functional training in their areas of expertise. During the first six-months in the EHP, cohort members will also conduct self-study components, participate in topical webinars; undergo coaching and also be assigned a mentor.

### **13. I have been working in UNHCR for many years. If selected, will I still have to go through the two weeks onboarding/orientation in Budapest?**

Yes. Ref IOM/002/2013, Page 2 paragraph 4 states "Recruitment and conversion for these initiatives will be based on a cohort system. These are designed for a specific number of staff members who begin on the same date and participate in the induction and complete together. Members of the cohort enjoy the benefit of knowledge sharing, camaraderie, diversity in backgrounds and mutual support offered by fellow inductees..."

### **14. Why do EHP recruits get mentors and coaches and regular UNHCR staff don't?**

UNHCR has an existing mentoring programme that is offered to staff. This programme was established in 2011 and each year approximately 15 staff work with a UNHCR mentor on a developmental agenda which they design themselves. UNHCR also provides coaching to staff. This is done by managers and guidance and support is provided by the Global Learning Centre (GLC). We will use these existing programmes to help onboard the EHP cohort. It is best practice in the recruitment field to onboard staff with this type of support to ensure a smooth transition into an organization and also to maintain high retention rates.

## Job security and future postings

### **15. Will the EHP be a one-time exercise?**

No, UNHCR intends to conduct the EHP on a bi-annual basis.

**16. How many new staff does UNHCR want to recruit through the EHP every year?**

This will depend on UNHCR staffing requirements at the P2 level. Our projection is that UNHCR will recruit between 20-40 EHP candidates per year.

**17. Will staff members who are converted retain a lien to their former position?**

Yes, staff members who are converted to the International Professional category will retain a lien to their former position for one year before being considered for the confirmation in the international category.

**18. I have an indefinite contract. Will I keep my indefinite status if selected?**

When selected, you will retain a lien on your former position for one year before being considered for confirmation in the International Professional category. During this time, you will keep your indefinite status. Upon successful completion of this one year period, you will be offered a fixed term appointment as the other cohort members in the program. If you wish to take up the challenges and obligations of the International Professional category and based on your acceptance of a fixed term appointment, your conversion to the International Professional category will be deemed to have been completed. If, however, you decide to decline this offer, you will revert to your former position and your contractual (indefinite) status will remain unchanged.

**19. How will DHRM ensure that every EHP recruit or convert will get a post?**

It is expected that cohort members get a post. If not assigned, a cohort member will be given a temporary appointment and will either: i) be assigned to positions where candidates have declined the offer; ii) be assigned to vacated EHP posts; iii) fill vacant positions due to emergency re-assignments, or other reasons.

**20. How long will the EHP cohort members remain in the programme?**

Upon acceptance of the offer and entry into the EHP as cohort members, they will be expected to complete a mandatory minimum of two years in the EHP. At the end of the assignment and upon successful completion of the programme, the EHP Cohort Members will then become eligible to apply as an internal candidate and compete for relevant vacancies in UNHCR. If a candidate declines the position offered, he/she will be deemed to have given up their membership as a cohort member.

**21. Will all those who pass the tests, be kept on a roster?**

No, there will be no roster. Interested candidates will have to re-apply each time the EHP program is announced.

**For managers**

**22. Will all P2 posts become EHP designated positions?**

No, DHRM will identify P2 profiles for the EHP and discuss with the relevant Bureaus and/or Divisions. At a later stage, cohort members will be matched to specific posts.

**23. I want to create three more P2 positions in my operation. Will they automatically become EHP positions?**

No, as stated above, the EHP is not geared to filling of specific positions but rather identifying a cohort of highly qualified individuals with specific profiles to build capacity in UNHCR's core functional areas.

**24. As a manager I am very stretched and I may not have the capacity for coaching new recruits.**

**Will managers receive guidance/trainings on how to coach EHP staff?**

Yes. A critical component of the successful onboarding/Orientation rests with the 'receiving' supervisor as he/ she will be responsible for the actual orientation in the field operations. The existing Induction & Orientation booklet ([Learn&Connect](#)) contains a chapter that will form the basis for support to receiving supervisors. Most managerial staff in UNHCR already plan their Orientation of new (and rotating) staff meticulously. However, considering the cost of the EHP this link is considered critical and thus the GLC will run (mandatory) webinars for receiving managers that supports planning the local induction; prepare checklists that support managers and facilitate experience sharing, among others.

**25. How is the JPO programme (mainly P2 positions) different or similar to the EHP?**

The JPO is another recruitment mechanism and will stay as such. The difference in the two programmes is that the former is sponsored by donor funds, while the latter is funded by UNHCR. After completion of these programmes members are eligible to apply to internally advertised positions. JPOs are also eligible to apply to the EHP Programme.

**26. Where can I find more information?**

For more details on the programme please see IOM/002/2013; FOM/002/2013 of 17 January 2013 or write to [hqehp@unhcr.org](mailto:hqehp@unhcr.org) or check the UNHCR Career website: <http://www.unhcr.org/ehp>